

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TORONT 00450 01 OF 02 211734Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 HA-05 PA-02 USIA-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 /048 W
-----073270 211811Z /53
R 211433Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7017
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TORONTO 0450

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, CA
SUBJ: REACTION TO INDICTMENT OF TORONTO SUN UNDER
OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.

REF: TORONTO 0439

1. THE SERVING OF SUMMONSES ON MARCH 17 BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON TORONTO SUN PUBLISHER DOUGLAS CREIGHTON AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF PETER WORTHINGTON FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT HAS DOMINATED THE TABLOID'S SUNDAY AND MONDAY EDITIONS, (THE SUN DOES NOT PUBLISH SATURDAY). OTHER TORONTO MEDIA HAVE BEEN GENERALLY RESTRAINED, CARRYING ONLY THE FACTUAL ELEMENTS OF THESE FIRST PRESS INDICTMENTS UNDER THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.

2. IN A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL MARCH 19, SUN EDITOR WORTHINGTON WROTE THAT "THE SUN IS PREPARED TO FIGHT THE ISSUE IN COURT AND IT RELIES IN OUR SYSTEM OF LAW TO SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE, THAT PRESS FREEDOMS ARE PRESERVED AND THAT THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST IS SERVED." STAFF-WRITTEN NEWS STORY IN SAME ISSUE HEADLINED "WORTHINGTON STEADFAST 'WE WON'T BACK DOWN'". THE MARCH 19 PAPER CARRIED STORY QUOTING TORY MP TOM COSSITT "A VITAL QUESTION TO ME IS THAT THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT MAY BE TRYING TO MUZZLE THE TORONTO SUN.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TORONT 00450 01 OF 02 211734Z

TO ME, THE WHOLE THING IS A POLITICAL DECISION - I WAS SURPRISED THE SUN WAS CHARGED BUT PERHAPS TRUDEAU FELT HE HAD TO FIND A SCAPEGOAT." THE MARCH 20 PAPER CARRIED QUOTES FROM FORMER TORY PRIME MINISTER JOHN DIEFENBAKER "THIS IS SIMPLY A CASE AGAINST THE SUN AND PARTICULARLY WORTHINGTON BECAUSE OF A DEEP HATRED, A PERSONAL HATRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER." DIEFEN-

BAKER WARNED THAT "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WILL BE ERASED IN CANADA" IF THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT WINS ITS PROSECUTION BUT WAS CONVINCED THAT "THERE IS NO JURY ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH THAT WOULD CONVICT ON SUCH CHARGES." THE SUN DEVOTED ITS MARCH 20 EDITORIAL TO THE CASE OF DOCTOR PETER TREUP WHOSE SECRET TRIAL FOR ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT ENDED IN SEPTEMBER 1977 AND FOR WHICH A VERDICT IS DUE APRIL 28. THE EDITORIAL MADE THE POINT THAT TREU HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO FOUR YEARS OF "PURGATORY" AND THAT "MORE FRIGHTENING STILL, IS THE APATHY OF CANADIANS. NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE. CERTAINLY NOT OUR MEDIA. WE DON'T DESERVE OUR FREEDOMS AND INDEED THEY SEEM TO BE SLIPPING AWAY."

3. THE COLUMNS IN THE SUN HAVE BEEN STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE PAPER'S POSITIONS. PAUL HELLYER WROTE MARCH 19 IN AN ARTICLE HEADLINED "OUR FREEDOM AT STAKE HERE" THAT THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT FOR ONE MOMENT HAVE LAID CHARGES AGAINST THE TORONTO STAR FOR AN OFFENCE OF THIS NATURE BECAUSE "THE STAR IS TOO IMPORTANT TO THE LIBERALS." HE CONTINUED "THE SUN'S CASE IS DIFFERENT. IT IS DISLIKED WITH A BURNING PASSION BECAUSE IT HAS A POINT OF VIEW THAT IS NOT ALWAYS FLATTERING TO THE GOVERNMENT."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 TORONT 00450 01 OF 02 211734Z

4. THE MEDIA IN TORONTO HAVE GENERALLY STUCK TO STRAIGHT COVERAGE ON THE MATTER. SOME OF THE FEW EXCEPTIONS WERE THE GLOBE AND MAIL'S EDITORIAL SATURDAY, MARCH 18, "IN THE NAME OF THE LAW", WHICH EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT "NEITHER OF THE SECTIONS UNDER WHICH THE CHARGES WERE LAID SAYS THAT PREJUDICE TO THE STATE MUST BE SHOWN.....(THE OFFICIALS SECRETS ACTS) IS SO BROAD, SO VAGUE, SO CAPABLE OF ABUSE THAT IT CANNOT SUPPORT THE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND THEREFORE IT CANNOT SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST. BUT THE LAW IS THE LAW. EVEN WHEN IT IS DANGEROUS." THE SUNDAY STAR'S OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT GEORGE BAIN TOOK A SIMILAR VIEW IN HIS MARCH 19 COLUMN "MOUNTIES ARE CARELESS, CARELESS-TAKE A LOOK AT THEIR SECURITY." AS

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TORONT 00450 02 OF 02 211751Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 HA-05 PA-02 USIA-15 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 /048 W

-----073480 211810Z /53

R 211433Z MAR 78

FM AMCONSUL TORONTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7018

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 TORONTO 0450

DESCRIBED IN REFTTEL, BAIN HAD WRITTEN MARCH 15 THAT MANY OF THE "SECRETS" IN THE SECURITY DOCUMENT APPEARED WITHOUT FOUNDATION. HE NOTED IN HIS MARCH 19 ARTICLE THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD DECIDED NOT TO PROSECUTE AN MP FOR WHAT HE SAID IN THE LEGISLATURE AND "THAT PROSECUTING COSSITT FOR WHAT HE HAS SAID OUTSIDE IT PERHAPS COULDN'T BE MADE TO STICK." HE THEN WROTE THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD DECIDED TO INDICT PETER WORTHINGTON OF THE TORONTO SUN FOR PUBLISHING SECRETS IN THE SAME TOP SECRET PAPER "SOME OF THEM DEMONSTRABLE RUBBISH". BAIN WAS NOT COMPLIMENTARY IN HIS REFERENCES TO WORTHINGTON. BAIN THEN NOTED SOME CURIOSITY WHY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OR THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT NOT HAVE SHOWN SOME INTEREST IN A C.T.V. TELEVISION PROGRAM BROADCAST NATIONALLY FEBRUARY 12 "ABOUT AN ALLEGED SOVIET SPY OPERATION CALLED OPERATION CODE BLUE, WHICH COVERED SOME OF THE SAME COSSITT - WORTHINGTON GROUND, AND OPENLY REFERRED TO THE CONTENTS OF FILES AND DOCUMENTS. ARE WE COMING TO SELECTIVE PROSECUTIONS AND SHOW TRIALS?".

5. IT WAS SOMEWHAT INTRIGUING THAT THE EDITORIAL CARTOON IN TORONTO SUN ON MARCH 17, THE DAY THE SUMMONSES WERE SERVED BY THE RCMP, SHOWED MP TOM
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TORONT 00450 02 OF 02 211751Z

COSSITT "IN THE POSITION" AGAINST THE WALL JUST INSIDE HIS OFFICE DOOR LOOKING AT HIS WATCH WHILE COBWEBS GATHERED HIS FEET. IT APPEARS THAT THE RCMP WENT TO A DIFFERENT DOOR LATER IN THE DAY.
DIGGINS

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY, SUN, NEWSPAPERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TORONT00450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780124-0773
Format: TEL
From: TORONTO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780340/aaaabhyr.tel
Line Count: 168
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 921d61c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 TORONTO 439
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3249682
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO INDICTMENT OF TORONTO SUN UNDER OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, CA, TORONTO SUN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/921d61c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014